12. The government

'Sir Humphrey: "Bernard, if the right people don't have power, do you know what happens? The wrong people get it!"'

Yes Prime Minister, Series 2, episode 5

Synopsis: A state is different to its government (1); What is a government? (2); The (only) purpose of the government is to control the state (3); How did governments acquire this purpose? (4); How did governments come to be? (5–6); Governments are natural to humans (7); Controlling the state (8–9); On the digital world breaking down governments' control over the(-ir) states (10); A beginning-of-time model fundamentally and irreversibly eroded: Leviathan's demise (11).

1. A state is different to its government*

Despite widespread (even prevalent, in certain cultures) confusion, a state is different to a government. The connection in the hearts and minds of people (most frequently in times of emergencies, as in 'the state should deal or should have dealt with this') that leads them to treat the two practically as synonyms needs to be dispelled once and for all. A state is not the same as a government—and should not be treated as such.

The state is a Being, an organisation that individualises humans and creates a suitable processing environment for them to live in.[407] The government is also an organisation, but one that is different from the state—in fact, it is the Being that controls the state.

2. What is a government?

A government is a Being, it is an organisation that exists in both the analogue and the digital worlds.[408] It will process information because it can. As with all organisations, it needs 'its' individuals, meaning the individuals

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407   See Chap. 11.
408   See Chap. 2, par. 6.

participating in it, to augment their information processing through it[409] in order to serve its singular purpose.

3. The (only) purpose of the government is to control the state*

As has been noted,[410] non-biological Beings have no inherent purpose (they process information because they can, but this is not their purpose) other than the one artificially given to them at the time of their materialisation. This is easily visualised in the case of modern organisations, the purposes of which are outlined in their deeds of incorporation. However, the same is true for governments, too. As organisations, governments have a single, specific purpose: to control the state.

This is the only purpose of a government. Other purposes given to it from time to time (to serve God, the state's citizens, the nation etc.) are given to it as a result of politics. All of them follow the necessary, but tacit, assumption that a government already controls a state—how else could all these grand purposes be achieved? These are therefore after-the-fact purposes, not the actual purpose of the Being, the organisation that is government. Its purpose, its *raison d'être*, is to control the state.

4. How did governments acquire this purpose? *

Although today governments (just the same as any other organisation) benefit from written constituting documents, this has not always been the case. Today the purpose of governments is written down in constitutions, but constitutions came to be only recently in human history. Governments (chieftains, kings, emperors, governing councils, etc.) existed long before them, presumably since the beginning of humanity. How then, did governments materialise in the analogue world and acquire this purpose so early in history?

5. How did governments come to be? *

Governments, in the form of chieftains or heads of (larger or smaller) families or governing councils, existed and were controlling their states

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409 See Chap. 2, par. 7.
410 See Chap. 2, par. 11.

(basically, extended families or clans) long before writing was invented. Why did governments exist at such an early stage? How did they come to be? Are they, like the state, natural to humans?

Governments came to be because the state, which was formed immediately when two humans named themselves and started talking to each other, is itself a dataset (a Being, in fact an organisation), and all datasets are subject to control by a Being. There is no dataset, Thing or Being, in the analogue or the digital world that is not under the control of a Being.[411]

Therefore, once a state was formed a Being immediately controlled it, in line with that Being's need and opportunity.[412] It was that Being that formed the first government, establishing a relationship between a state and its government that has never since ended (writing, once invented, merely formalised the relationship).

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It is impossible to say how (or much less, why) that particular Being became chieftain, king or ruler over the first state. It is possible that decisions (most importantly, what to call themselves, i.e. what to call their state) were made by the stronger or the cleverer or the older individual in the state, or, perhaps, collectively. Whatever the case may be, that Being (regardless of whether it was an organisation of one person or one made up of multiple individuals) became the government of that state.

Two things are important to note, however. First, that decision-making was internal, within the state. The naming of the state (and of its individuals) was performed internally, within that state, and not externally, by other states (as, for example, is the case today with humans naming dogs[413]). This self-naming is the result of the self-consciousness acquired by humans, which led to the formation of the state as the only natural way to warrant it (their self-consciousness).

The second point of note is the fact of the decision-making itself. A decision was made by a Being and it was applied within the state. Decisions are, of course, the norm among all pack animals, and made by their leader, but these are sustenance-relevant. In this case, the decision made about the name of the state (and thus the name of each of its citizens),

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411 See Chap. 6, par. 3.
412 See Chap. 5.
413 See Chap. 8, par. 7.

other than revealing self-consciousness, went much further—it initiated a decision-making relationship (that was unavoidably hierarchical[414]) that continues to this day.

7. Governments are natural to humans

The creation of governments therefore immediately followed the formation of states, as a natural result of their (the states') existence. In this sense governments are themselves natural to humans: there can be no state without a government.[415]

8. Controlling the state

What does it mean, that the government controls the state? It means that the government has the ability to allow or prohibit processing operations both on the state and by the state.[416]

The former means that the government has the ability to control processing operations by others (other Beings) on the information platform that is the state. This it does by basically prohibiting (i.e. monitoring) all of these operations to the best of its ability, securing exclusive control over the information processing carried out in a state for itself.[417]

The latter means that the government can allow or prohibit any processing operation by the information platform that is the state, regardless of the fact that the state is natural to its citizens and necessary for them to live a meaningful life. Moments of both inhuman atrocities and of exemplary humanism throughout history are the result of governments and their decisions (i.e. of politics), not of the state.

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414   On hierarchy as an organisational system natural to humans, see note 6/7/1.

415   Anarchy is, of course, a kind of government, not of state.

416   But the government cannot destroy the state; hence it has no property rights over it (see Chap. 24, par. 1).

417   See, however, par. 10, and also the analysis on sovereignty in Chap. 16, par. 4.

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The state has no specific purpose[418]—and the government does not offer it one. It is easy to confuse the decisions of the government with setting the purpose of the state. The government, because it controls the state, may decide to set any purpose for the state's processing, that is, for the information processing carried out by it.[419] This does not, however, make these purposes the purpose of the state. The state preceded the government and itself has no purpose—or, at least, not a specific one.

In fact, the government, as a Being, has needs and it is these needs that it serves through the information processing made possible to it through control of the state.

10. On the digital world breaking down governments' control over the(-ir) states*

Because a government controls its state, it can allow or prohibit any processing operation on its (the state's) platform.[420] This it does to the exclusion of any other Being. A government, having as its sole purpose the control of the state, zealously holds on to its privileged position; it does not share control with any other party. Although it can be claimed that this absolute and exclusive internal control by the government over its state was introduced only after the emergence of the Westphalian[421] state, this is not the case: no government (chieftain, king, city council or emperor) has historically ever accepted sharing control of its state with anyone. Simply put, a government does not, and will not, share control of its state—not willingly,[422] at least.

How is such control attained in practice? Myriad information processing operations take place, both on the information platform that is the state and by the state itself—how can a government monitor and control all of them?[423]

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418 See Chap. 11, par. 7.

419 After all, this is the case for any organisation—except the state; see Chap. 2, par. 9.

420 See par. 8.

421 See note 16/1/3.

422 Cases of state succession are meant here (see Chap. 15), rather than cases of internal political strife that might lead to replacement of the government by another.

423 Total control is impossible anyway (see Chap. 6, par. 2)—it is an unreachable and unattainable aim of government (see Chap. 16, par. 5).

In essence, until the advent of the digital world, control was achieved factually, in practice.[424] Until only a few decades ago, all information processing carried out by a state's citizens was performed locally, on the information platform that is their state. Individuals created families, studied, worked and transacted within closed, physical state borders. Although travel or relocation (for shorter or longer periods) was possible, there was in fact no way for anyone to transact across borders without their state's involvement, and thus the control of its government, either in the form of products physically crossing borders with the relevant paperwork and paying import/export taxes, or individuals crossing them using passports, visas and other travel documents. Challenges to this process have certainly occurred throughout human history (e.g. from religious organisations, company-states etc.), however none have survived the clash with the government. This was as true in the distant past as it was until a few decades ago, when the digital world (in essence, the Internet) emerged.

Governments were therefore able to control most[425] processing operations on the information platform that is the(-ir) state, because the state was a necessary party to all information processing carried out by its citizens. In other words, the state knew everything (was omnipresent) and the government, through its control of the state, was able to control everything (was omnipotent[426]).

Governments were therefore able to provide security and protect the rights of their citizens because they controlled their information flows. They basically controlled the flow of money and people through control of the relevant information—and used this control to serve any purpose they wished. Governments could impose internal order and undertake large-scale projects by using this information and could protect themselves from external enemies by being able to mobilise resources (people and material) over which they had control.

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424 See also Chap. 17, par. 5.

425 On the true meaning of control see Chap. 6, par. 2; specifically, then, the government controlled the majority of the attributes of Beings or Things on the information platform that was its state.

426 The state could not be omnipotent, because it has no will of its own, see also Chap. 16, par. 3.

11. A beginning-of-time model fundamentally and irreversibly eroded: Leviathan's demise*

The digital world today has eroded this age-old model by removing exclusive control of information from the reach of the state. Now individuals (who have become users[427]) transact over online platforms, bypassing the mandatory state controls (borders, customs etc.) of the past. They study online and acquire certificates from organisations that are not necessarily nationally accredited or supervised. They create cross-national communities and exchange information or carry out common projects without any state involvement. They have direct access to information generated outside their countries' borders, completely unmonitored by their states. Governments that had previously comfortably controlled the flow of the personal information of their citizens through control of the state now face competition from private online platforms (which are controlled by and form the territory of competing states[428]). The age-old, beginning-of-time model of government control over the (its) state, and the state's control over its citizens, is being fundamentally challenged.

A brief examination of the frontispiece in Hobbes's *Leviathan* is revealing for the purposes of this argument. In it, a giant crowned figure is seen emerging from the landscape, towering high above the ground and clutching a sword and a crosier, beneath a quote from the Book of Job: '*Non est potestas Super Terram quae Comparetur ei*'.[429] The torso and arms of the giant are composed of over 300 people all facing inwards, away from the viewer. The giant is intended to represent the state, composed of its citizens. It provides security to them under social contract theory. How is it able to do that? Tellingly, by staying above the landscape, by seeing (and knowing) all, by exercising control over it.

However, the emergence of the digital world has changed everything—it is, in fact, threatening to drown the Leviathan, to bring it to its knees. The artist has decided that none of the people who comprise the giant should face the viewer; rather they all face the state. It is exactly this crucial detail that has fundamentally changed: today individuals have (individual, user[430]) faces, and are looking outwards, to the whole wide world, which

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427   See Chap. 17, par. 10.
428   See Chap. 17, par. 12.
429   'There is no power on earth to be compared to him.'
430   See Chap. 17, par. 11.

has suddenly been opened up to each one of us, for us to use without the need to relocate, in an unprecedented twist in human history.

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